



cc CO MSC JD

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

29 December, 1983

PERSONAL

YTS

It is very good of you to have gone to so much trouble to set out the position on Civil Service participation in YTS in your letter of 23 December and to find a solution to our problem.

I entirely share your concern that the matter should be settled as quickly as possible and without a form of publicity which would damage prospects for YTS elsewhere in the Civil Service. Equally, I am concerned that the Prime Minister might be asked at any time about the YTS traineeship in No. 10 which she announced in May and which was expected to be implemented in September, and it would be difficult to make a convincing public defence of the reasons why it has not been possible to implement the Scheme so far. Although all of us well understand the labyrinthine processes of consultation involved in getting the schemes under way, it would be difficult to quote these as a reason without appearing ineffectual.

I am therefore very grateful for the steps which you and Geoffrey Holland are taking. We will hope that the difficulties are resolved on 3 January but, if they are not, it is comforting to know that we can nevertheless expect to have our trainee before the end of January. Presumably, if we are asked about it in the meantime, we could say that this is what we are expecting?

I am copying this letter, on a personal basis, to Robert Armstrong and Geoffrey Holland.

H. E. R. BUTLER

Peter Le Cheminant, Esq., CB,
Management and Personnel Office.



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PERSONAL

23 December 1983

Robin Butler, Esq
10 Downing Street

Dear Robin,

YTS

Following our conversation yesterday I thought you would welcome a note on where we stand and the considerations which bear.

As you know after prolonged negotiation with the Council and Civil Service Unions we concluded a framework agreement with them in late November which enabled YTS to go ahead in the Civil Service. The framework agreement is of course an enabling document with individual schemes still subject to local agreement with Trades Union branches.

As I recorded at the time the national framework agreement was achieved only with massive - and courageous - backstairs help from the union leaders involved. In particular Alistair Graham the General Secretary of our largest single union - the CPSA - was operating against the background of specific and hostile conference resolutions at a time when he was deeply in conflict with left wing extremists in his union.

In advance of the framework agreement being in place we set about organising the Cabinet Office /DTI YTS scheme which also covers No 10. We obtained the necessary outline clearance of our scheme from the MSC Area Manpower Board (which includes TU and employer representatives) subject only - but vitally - to the notification to them of acceptance of the scheme by the local TU branches concerned and we booked the training places needed at an FE college. Once the national agreement was in place we sought the concurrence of our TU branches. Our timetable - based on the assumption that all would go well - envisaged the trainees being selected in late December/early January with the FE 'induction course' starting on 16 January and the trainees in post a week later. It was an operation designed to meet the PM's wishes for speed and, so far as I know, no other Civil Service non-industrial YTS scheme has yet been finally agreed. In the event, while our TU side (representing all the Civil Service unions) accepted the Cabinet Office scheme by a majority vote the local CPSA branch refused cooperation and claimed that under the national YTS rules the scheme could not go ahead without their consent. Attempts

Robin Butler, Esq

23 December 1983

by officials to persuade them to change their minds failed. We then sought the advice of the CCSU at national level. Bill McCall well takes the point that an early rebuff would imperil other Civil Service schemes and has promised to do everything he can to help. To this end he is in touch with Alistair Graham and others. There can of course be no guarantee that the branch concerned will accept guidance from their union headquarters. But the firm advice of the CCSU leaders was that we should try this route first. As a supporting move we are arranging that a joint union/official/MSU/trouble shooting committee - provided for in our framework agreement and designed to help sort out local difficulties - should meet on 3 January. That may succeed in opening the way.

If it fails the next step (and one where our position will be much strengthened if we have first exhausted our own procedural processes) would be to submit our scheme to the MSU's Area Manpower Board who have authority to consider a case without union support.

As a fall back I have been in touch with Geoffrey Holland of the MSU. He will ensure wider national union pressure on the CPSA and has also said that, if the meeting on 3 January fails to deliver the goods, he will, by one means or another, find you a youngster before the end of January.

Underlying all this has been my concern to settle the matter as quickly as possible and without publicity. We do not want a situation to arise where a civil service union branch appears to have scored a personal victory over the Prime Minister: equally we do not want an early public row to encourage other civil service TU branches to be difficult. The ultimate losers would be the youngsters we hope to train.

I have recorded this at some length so that you will know the position.

I am copying this letter also on a personal basis to Robert Armstrong and Geoffrey Holland.

P Le Cheminant

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23 DEC 1988